NPS Form 10-900 (3-82)

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

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Final Parties Ca

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7. Description Condition X excellent X good Tulns X altered X unaitered X moved date N/A Moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The group of buildings comprising the Laurel Industrial School Historic District, located about eight miles north of Richmond in Henrico County, includes a significant Romanesque Revival-Victorian school building surrounded by a selection of buildings typical of turn-of-the-century domestic styles - pyramidal, Georgian Revival, and gable-front types, as well as some unique variations. This six-acre community at the intersection of Hungary and Old Staples Mill roads is the nucleus of what was a 175-acre farm and industrial school. The quiet, rural atmosphere has remained almost completely unchanged for the past eighty years. The district includes five contributing buildings and one noncontributing building.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Robert Stiles Building or Main Building of the Laurel Industrial School is a massive, two-story structure constructed of red brick and a hipped slate roof that features fourteen chimneys. The interior plans are extremely simple and comprise about 14,700 square feet. The site, located at 2900 Hungary Drive, is in excellent condition and is presently in the process of restoration for conversion to office and warehouse space.

Built about 1894-96, the seven-part facade is dominated on the east, original front, by a projecting, pedimented pavilion. Typical of a sizable public institution of the era, the entrance is on a raised first floor, reminiscent of the piano nobile ideal. The exterior style is simple - probably owing to the Laurel Industrial Schools's limited budget - but features excellent Romanesque Revival and domestic Victorian features. The east facade, no longer the front of the building, features a central doorway with half-round window, framed in wood molding. This is covered by a cantilevered wooden hood, a paired set of large, second-story arched windows, and under the cornice, a trio of decorative Romanesque wooden arches. The second-story windows in the pavilion still have intact a fence-like grill that dates from the time of the industrial school.

The flanking portions of the building — as well as the rear and side facades — are regulated by non-protruding pedimented forms demarked by brick pilasters that extend down from the eave to the second—story beltcourse. Two of the three beltcourses are of vertically—laid brick that emphasize the weightiness of the Main Building. On the second floor the beltcourse also serves as archivolt trim around the window frames. Each of the beltcourses and segmental arches is all rubbed brick. All the windows are sash; on the first floor four—over—four with a segmental—arch transom atop; on the second floor, four—over—four lights set in a Romanesque lancet pattern. The fenestration on the first floor features brick, segmental arches that intersect the middle beltcourse, this one narrow, of horizontally placed bricks.

The south facade (facing Hungary Road) was altered shortly after the school was sold in the 1930s to accommodate a retail business. At this time the six windows were removed and a central doorway with a rectangular transom and flanking storefront windows were installed.

The interior of the Main Building is austere with some very unique constructive elements. Within the central pavilion form is the hall and stairway to the second floor. On the

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 _X 1800–1899 _X 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community planning conservation conservation conservation conservation conservation conservation conservation/settlement	landscape architecture law literature military music philosophy X politics/government	e religion science sculpture X social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1892-1905	Builder/Architect	unknown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The complex of buildings that comprise the Laurel Industrial School preserves not only an interesting range of domestic turn-of-the-century building types and styles, but also the character of a small neighborhood that originated with the school's founding under the auspices of the Prison Association of Virginia 1892. The Association, a group of private citizens who sought to reform the state's penal system, especially Virginia's treatment of juvenile offenders, established the complex as a self-supporting model industria reformatory for boys. While privately owned and administered, the school served as an extension of state government, receiving state appropriations until the Commonwealth took control of the property in 1920. In 1932, the state closed the Laurel facility and moved the school to Goochland County. About three hundred boys lived at the school at any one After attending classes three hours each day, the inmates either occupied themselves at chores in the school's garden, dairy barn, or grain fields, or worked in the tailor or blacksmith shop. Most of the original school buildings at Laurel are still standing including the school's first dormitory and the school infirmary; school teachers' dwelling, and officers' quarters (all now private residences). The Superintendent's spacious Georgian-Revival house is said to have been built by the boys themselves, with only one professional builder to guide their activity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Laurel, which originally included a railway station and until just recently one of the last privately operated U.S. post offices, was first known as Hungary Station. After the Civil War it came to be called Jenningsville, presumably after the Jennings family who owned large tracts of land there. The grave site of one of the Jennings clan is, in fact, situated rather awkwardly in the center of a large, gravel parking area behind the Main Building. After the turn of the century, the post office was renamed "School, Virginia," after the community's dominant institution, the Laurel Industrial School. In 1920 the school was transferred into state hands and about twelve years later moved to Goochland. The various buildings were sold to local residents and became private dwellings; Main Building became a store. About the time the school departed, residents supported renaming the community Laurel in recognition of the number of laurel trees in the area.

The complex known as the Laurel Industrial School is located about eight miles north of Richmond at the intersection of Hungary and Old Staples Mill roads in Laurel, Henrico County. The area of approximately Six acres served as the nucleus of the model reform/industrial school established by the Prison Association of Virginia, in opposition to the contemporary and harsh penal practices they deemed inappropriate for minors. The objectives of the Prison Association, which was officially chartered in 1890, were outlined in its constitution:

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

9. Ma	<u>jor Biblio</u>	graphical	Reference	CeS(See Cont.	inuation Sheet #7)
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LAUREL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT - Henrico County, VA Continuation sheet #1 Item number 7

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7. DESCRIPTION - Architectural Analysis (cont.)

first floor doors lead to a large open room on either side. The stairs themselves are peculiar to the function of the building. The passageway is literally partitioned into two separate stair units, the outlet of each to the north and south halves of the upper floor, respectively. This was to ensure that the younger and older boys did not mingle, either in passing or in the dormitory quarters.

It is this second floor - which served as sleeping area for the incarcerated boys - that offers the most unique architectural feature. The hipped roof is upheld by a complex exposed-truss system. Iron tie beams and massive wood struts are engineered into a support web that relies predominantly on the strength of slender but mighty rods; all intersecting at massive joists. This space served as dormitory for the boys.

The first floor of the Main Building is supported by a central series of slender iron columns, topped by simple capitals, that support the primary central beam. The south portion of this space served as school room and sometime chapel; the north end as dining room. In photographs of the school room published in 1980, this lengthwise division is shown encased in wooden piers with ornamental panels that articulate the space into bays. It also appears that these bays housed vertical panels that could be lowered to further subdivide the space.

The basement rooms underneath the school space included an area for washing and related activities. A long, shallow trough still remains where it provided piped-in water for the boys, although a chunk is missing where someone apparently tried to remove it. The kitchen was situated underneath the dining room; food was passed up via a dumbwaiter.

A great deal of restoration has been done to the Main Building, although structurally it has remained in excellent condition. The current owner, Robert Bluford, Jr., of Richmond, has replaced missing slate shingles with an acceptable substitute, Supradur slate. The built-in gutters were replaced with copper and all fourteen chimneys were rebuilt from the roof line up. The original wooden doors on the east facade as well as some of the brick, sustained some sand-blasting damage at the hand of a previous owner, and need to be returned to their original surface condition. The steps to the original front door have been reconstructed using period brick salvaged from a building on the property that was torn down; the steps leading up to the present entrance on the south facade will be replaced similarly. Most of the original windows were destroyed by vandals during the years of vacancy and approximately ninety percent of them have been replaced to date. The owner currently plans to restore the Main Building with the south, or altered facade, as the entranceway - thus to its 1930s appearance.

(See Continuation sheet #2)

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7. DESCRIPTION - Architectural Analysis (cont.)

The building that serves as the school infirmary at 2915 Hungary Road, is presently a private residence. It is characteristic of a national, folksy house type typical during the early decades of the century. This two-story gable-front-and-wing type is narrow, with its wings to either side, all topped by a steeply pitched roof that is covered in sheet metal. The raised porch features spindlework detailing, although an awkward cement-block base appears to have replaced what likely was a balustrade. A partial porch tucked in a corner of a wing features turned post and Eastlake trim. This T-shape plan was popular after the advent of the light balloon frame coupled with a new availability of timber, thus simplifying the building process. In this case, the "wings" are only one bay wide. This, as well as the general spareness of ornamentation, is likely attributable to the school's limited coffers.

*2

The building at 2911 Hungary Road, formerly that of the superintendent's house within the Laurel Industrial School complex, now serves as a private residence as well, dating from 1900-05. It is a pyramidal form and features a basically square plan rendered asymmetrical by a smaller two-story wing in the rear. A full, L-shaped porch wraps around the front facade and abuts this rear wing. Its decorative features include a heavy cornice with fine dentil molding, Tuscan columns, and a simple balustrade. The porch is asymmetrical and raised with the entrance to the right of center balanced by the door itself to the left of center. The entire structure sits on a brick foundation; the facade is faced in horizontal siding. Overhanging eaves dominate the house, highlighted by frequent bracketing; the roof is of sheet metal. A trio of two-over-one windows hang from the cornice on the second floor, balanced by the door and two like windows on the first floor. This house is stylistically very similar to its neighbor in terms of type, plan, and facade treatment.

The building that once served as administrative offices/teachers' quarters at 2909 Hungary Road is also a private residence. It is a simpler, one-story version of the superintendent's house - pyramidal but with a hipped roof of sheet metal constructed in a very low pitch. Typical of this square plan, a full, integral porch sits under the principal roof. It sits on a brick foundation with an exterior of horizontal board construction. The front facade is extremely graceful, though simple and pure of design. The symmetrical elevation includes a central doorway with transom, flanked by extremely vertical nine-over-one paired windows. The porch cornice is plain, supported by six slender fluted piers that are linked by a balustrade rail. Fluted pilasters join the porch and facade. This structure, like its neighbor, was built between 1900-05.

Located at the corner of (2907) Hungary and Old Staples Mill roads is a like building, now private residence. The square plan with pyramidal roof echoes its neighbors, but features a clearer Georgian Revival set of details. The sand-colored bricks of this structure - which has been reputed to be that of the superintendent - are said to have been handmade by the Laurel Industrial School boys, who are also believed to have built the structure. The front facade is divided into equal bays with regular two-over-two

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LAUREL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT - Henrico County, VA

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7. DESCRIPTION - Architectural Analysis (cont.)

fenestration with flush concrete lintels. The second-story windows on the side facades are segmentally-arched and paired, while those on the first floor are of irregular shape and placement. A full, L-shaped porch dominates the front facade, and this has been partially screened in by the current owner. Tuscan columns, a balustrade rail and lattice woodwork support the roof, which features a heavy entablature. Fine dentil work decorates this and the entablature of the principal roof. The central entrance consists of double wooden doors surmounted with a transom window, which contributes to its probable use for administration duties; this is also supported by the existence of a fire-escape stair on the west facade and iron bars attached to the basement windows. A one-rank addition has been added to the rear facade, having a stucco exterior and somewhat arts & crafts-like window treatment. The original building is roofed in sheet metal and features six chimneys. (See Continuation Sheet #8)

8. SIGNIFICANCE - Historical Background (cont.)

- The improvement of the government, discipline and general management of prisons within this State, whether under the control of the State, City or County authorities;
- The amelioration of the condition of prisoners, whether detained as witnesses, or for trial, or finally convicted and
- 3. The encouragement and aid of discharged convicts who exhibit any desire to reform and become good citizens. $^{\rm l}$

In this unusual circumstance, then a private group of citizens organized themselves with the goal of corrective actions when the state would not; yet the Prison Association was very nearly an extension of the government. The group intended to participate in penal reform on a statewide level. Although their work never went beyond Laurel, the ideals and practices instituted there represent Virginia's first endeavor toward 20th-century prison reform. Financial support of the association and school were provided predominantly by state appropriation, \$3 members' dues, private contributions, and factory receipts. A key supporter of the move for this sort of prison reform, particularly in the case of younger children, was Governor Fitzhugh Lee. He said in his 1889 address to the General Assembly:

I would recommend that the younger criminals be separated, if possible, from the older ones, and reformatory measures be practiced, as far as possible, with them.⁴

The present site of the former school was established about 1892, after two years of restricted temporary quarters elsewhere in Richmond.⁵

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE - Historic Background (cont.)

The regimen at Laurel Industrial School was intended to offer a basic education - reading, writing, arithmetic - and on-the-job industrial skills, as the boys were generally considered minor delinquents or just the product of a broken home. A considerable working farm and workshops provided jobs for the boys, and it is believed the school produced its own electricity. Based on an inventory of Laurel Industrial School in 1920 at the time it passed into state control, assets included: equipment for office, household, kitchen, blacksmith, and cannery, as well as milk cows, bulls, hogs and pigs, heifers, poultry, mules, horses, carts, a Dodge car and a Ford truck.

The Prison Association considered jails merely corruptive "Devil's Kindergartens," the sort of environment their "Homes of Industry" could eradicate. At Laurel, the epitome of this philosophy, they hoped to promote:

...The sifting out and separation as far as practical, of accidental and reclaimable, from habitual and irreclaimable criminals, with appropriate discipline and treatment of each class. 10

The Main Building was the first to be erected, about 1893-94, and it served as dormitory, chapel, school, and dining hall for the 250 or so white boys aged 6 to 18 who were incarcerated there. Within this building itself the boys were kept from one another. The central stairway was literally walled into two passages, thus in the two upper sleeping rooms and traveling on the stairs, the boys were deprived of any mingling. 12

At the same time the Main Building was being constructed, a residence or second administration building was built across Hungary Road, connected by a cement walkway. It is believed that the boys hand made the bricks for the Georgian-Revival house and built it themselves. 13 Iron bars on the basement windows today attest to its former reform school environment.

In 1892 the state awarded the Prison Association \$10,000 "for the purpose of erecting and equipping workshops and buildings for the use of our school at Laurel." With this money adjuncts were made to the Main Building: "a large bake oven, a new kitchen, cement floors, etc." 15

Two years later it was cited that 129 boys had been committed to the institution, as well as an intent voiced that it should be developed toward self-sufficiency. Though a profitable manufacturing endeavor never materialized, the boys were responsible for all farmwork, building repairs, the manufacture of clothing and shoes they wore, as well as spending three hours daily attending classes. 16

(See Continuation Sheet #5)

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LAUREL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT - Henrico County, Va

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8. SIGNIFICANCE - Historical Background (cont.)

In 1895 President James Caskie requested another \$10,000 to erect a second dormitory with school rooms and laundry, among other facilities. This was not built until about 1906, however. Located next to the Main Building, also facing the railroad tracks, this later came into the possession of Henrico County and was used as a public school until a few years ago; it no longer exists.

Though the philosophy at the Laurel Industrial School emphasized reform through labor, a report by the Committee on Asylums and Prisons in 1898 says that the use of shackles should be abolished in lieu of something "less grating to the public," suggesting instead "a few cages." 18

Charles Hutzler, president of the Prison Association of Virginia in 1902, addressed the National Committee of the Charities and Correction that year, with particular praise for a new training method he hoped to employ at Laurel. He refers to the Sloyd System, a manual-training process that begins a boy with the use of a jackknife, moving gradually to competency with larger equipment. Upon completion, the young men receive a diploma and the title of journeyman. This treatment, which was established at Laurel, differs sharply from the established concepts of using prisoners as road laborers or not providing any type of diversion at all. 19 Other improvements at the school include the use of better-fitting and better-quality clothing and the introduction of formal dining, complete with white table cloths and instruction in table manners. 20

Although the Prison Association of Virginia had been operating Laurel very nearly as as extension of the state's penal system, it was not a state-owned property. By 1916 a movement was under way to coordinate Virginia's reform institutions and penitentiary to promote inter-cooperation, more efficient management and financial sayings²¹, coupled with a report issued on the coordination of reform institutions.²²

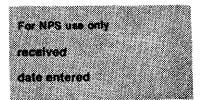
On Feb. 21, 1920, this was realized when the Laurel Industrial School as well as similar reform schools were ordered to convey all property and control to the state of Virginia. This was the criteria for approval of the school's \$82,500 annual budget; the school's name was henceforth changed to the Virginia Industrial School for Boys. Z3 Much of the property was sold off at this time and the school moved shortly thereafter to a larger location.

The Prison Association of Virginia's Laurel Industrial School set a state precendent in the goal of prison and penal reform. The enlightened perspective of correction and reform, particularly in the case of juvenile boys, foresaw many of the humane developments in state policy enacted in this century.

¹ Charter, Constitution and Organization of the Prison Association of Virginia with an Address (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones, 1890), p. 9.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE - Historical Background (cont.)

²Ibid., p. 14.

3Virginia, Congress, House, Third Annual Report of the Prison Association of Virginia, H.D. No. 2, 1895-96, p. 2.

⁴Virginia, Congress, Senate, Address to the General Assembly, 1889-90, p. 30.

⁵Jeffrey Marshall O'Dell, <u>Inventory of Early Architecture and Historic and Archaeological Sites: Countyof Henrico, Virginia (Richmond, System Printing Ltd., 1976), p. 112.</u>

⁶Ibid., p. 112.

⁷Jeffrey O'Dell interview with area residents, Laurel, October 1976.

⁸Henrico County Courthouse, Grantors Index to Deeds, Deed Book 215-B, p. 69.

⁹Charter, Constitution, and Organization of the Prison Association, p. 13.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 13.

 11 Virginia, Congress, Senate, Report of the Prison Association of Virginia for the Years 1896-97, 1896-97, p. 4 .

12 Robert Bluford, Jr., Owner of Main Building, Richmond, October 1984.

130'Dell, Inventory, p. 112.

14 Virginia, Congress, Senate, Second Annual Report of the Virginia Prison Association to the General Assembly, S.D. No. 17, 1893-94, p. 3.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 3.

16 Third Annual Report, p. 1.

17 Charter and Reports, Laurel Industrial School, Laurel, Virginia, Laurel: 1906-07, p. 25.

18 Virginia, Congress, House, Report, H.D. No. 8, 1897-98, p. 4.

19 Address of the Prison Association of Virginia to the Citizens and Officials of the State, (Richmond: Herb T. Ezekial, 1904), p. 4.

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SIGNIFICANCE - Historical Background (cont.)

20 Report of the President of the Prison Association of Virginia as Delegate to the National Conference of the Charities and Corrections, (Richmond: Herb T. Ezekial, 1902), p. 12.

²¹Virginia, Congress, House, 1916, p. 816.

²²Third Annual Report, p. 2.

 23 Virginia, Congress, House, H.D. No. 4, 1920, p. 43.

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Virginia, House. Third Annual Report of the Prison Association of Virginia, H.D. No. 3, 1895-96.

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Virginia, Senate. Report of the Prison Association of Virginia for the Years 1896-97, 1896-97.

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LAUREL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT - Henrico County, VA Continuation sheet #8 ltem number 7.10

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7. DESCRIPTION - Architectural Analysis (cont.)

A residence located at 2913 Hungary Road is, because of its age, a noncontributing building. The house was built in ca. 1940 after the state closed the Laurel facility and was never associated with it. The wood-frame, $l^{\frac{1}{2}}$ -story structure is covered with aluminum siding and does not break the scale of the surrounding school structures.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the W side of Old Staples Mill Rd. approx. 200' S of the intersection of Old Staples Mill Rd. with Hungary Rd.; thence extending approx. 400' N to a point on the S side of the old school drive; thence approx. 750' W to a point at the NE corner of the intersection of the school drive and Hungary Rd.; thence approx. 300' SE to a point on the N side of Hungary Rd.; thence approx. 200' S; thence approx. 550' E to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification

The bounds for the Laurel Industrial School district have been drawn to include approximately six acres which include five contributing buildings and one noncontributing building. The six acres also encompass the school yard/play ground located to the rear of the main building and which the other buildings overlook. Excluded from the nominated property are the former "tailor workshop", most recently the clubhouse of the Laurel Golf Course which has been drastically altered and a barn which is in a state of deterioration and at some distance from the main school complex.

(scale:1:24000) USGS 7.5' quadrangle 1963 (PR 1981) Glen Allen, VA LAUREL INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL HISTORIC DISTRICT, Henrico County, VA UTM References: B-18/278580/4168830 A-18/278600/4169110 D-18/278320/4169060 C-18/278430/4168860 E-18/278410/4169120 Hungary = ==J105 No. 4167000m.N. RICHMOND (STATE CAPITOL) 8 MIX ROAD CLASSIFICATION Light-duty Heavy-duty Unimproved dirt ======= Medium-duty. Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route GLEN ALLEN, VA. N3737.5—W7730/7.5 QUADRANGLE LOCATION 1963 PHOTOREVISED 1981 DMA 5459 II NE-SERIES V834